

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

Questions and Answers from Prior Applicant Webinar (asked in FY2014 applicant webinar, and updated to be accurate with respect to the 2015 Request for Applications)

Please note: this Q&A is a tool to help applicants with some of the frequently asked questions. It is not a substitute for reading and carefully following all of the instructions in the Request for Applications (RFA) and the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. In fact, many of these questions will not make sense unless you have read the Request for Applications and/or the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Questions Relating to Scope or Focus:

QUESTION: Is there a preference for regional versus statewide focus for proposals? **ANSWER:** No.

QUESTION: What about multi-state proposals? Is that okay as compared to single state proposals?
ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Can standard grant projects be national in focus or do they need to be regional projects?
ANSWER: The BFRDP legislation, and therefore the RFA, call for local and regional initiatives for standard grants. A proposal for a national project would need to have strong local or regional presence and/or partners and a clear workplan for achieving and documenting results on the ground. Educational Enhancement Teams can be regional or national.

QUESTION: Could a project involving two states that are not contiguous be funded. **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: What age range does "school-based agricultural education" refer to? **ANSWER:** BFRDP is for adult learners, or older adolescents who are on a path to enter farming. We don't set a minimum age range, but it would be hard to achieve our target impacts (new farmers helped or started) in the 3-year life of the project with younger audiences. Some projects have included youth in addition to adults. Projects involving youth should focus on 16 years and older if they have an on-farm component, since child labor requirements may deem agricultural work to be particularly hazardous for those under 16.

QUESTION: Does a proposal with a focus on creating training apprenticeships through a "train the trainer" approach HAVE to be submitted in the Educational Enhancement category? Or can it still be a standard proposal, especially if there's also a direct focus on beginning farmers and ranchers? **ANSWER:** A standard project can include train-the-trainer (TTT) along with direct farmer training, if TTT will amplify the impact of your work, but be sure to achieve our target outcomes (new farmers helped) in the 3-year span of the project.

QUESTION: Is there any preference for programs that have been previously funded vs new ones?
ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: What are your limits or expectations of numbers of farmers served? I have seen a wide range on the prior grant descriptions. Can you talk about the different factors that would cause you to select a project with fewer rather than greater numbers? **ANSWER:** Some projects serve hundreds of people through workshops, internet training, and other methods with broad reach; some serve a smaller group more intensively (e.g., incubators, apprenticeships) and/or work with audiences who are harder to reach or have significant barriers. Reviewers will evaluate your proposed reach (numbers), the degree of change you propose to bring about, and the challenges faced by your target audience.

QUESTION: Can you only ask for a certain number of dollars depending upon number of farmers' reached? **ANSWER:** No. Ask for the funds that are needed to accomplish your objectives, and make a good case for the anticipated impacts of your work and your ability to accomplish your objectives and achieve those impacts.

QUESTION: You said most grants pick one target audience and train on a range of topics. Can you train on one specialized topic for a range of target audiences? **ANSWER:** Yes, if you can show outcomes as a result, such as improved success of beginning farmers and ranchers.

QUESTION: The listing of topics in the RFA does not include urban agriculture, aquaculture, hydroponics, vermicomposting, all of which are of interest to beginning farmers. Will these topics be considered? **ANSWER:** Yes, if you can demonstrate their relevance to the beginning farmer audience you aim to serve.

QUESTION: Some of our new farmers just got a lot of cold damage on their specialty crops. Would testing various types of cold damage prevention be considered as well? **ANSWER:** No, BFRDP funds cannot be used for research.

QUESTION: We run a workforce development program on an urban farm where many of our graduates move on to work at other urban farms, but few or none would start their own farm. Is this type of program something you're interested in? **ANSWER:** It depends. If working on a farm is a step toward running a farm, perhaps. The purpose of BFRDP is to train farmers, including farm workers if their overall goal is to become farmers, but not people whose end goals are to be employed as farm workers. We do fund projects in urban, rural, peri-urban, all types of settings.

QUESTION: Is it expected that the proposals will be for three year projects? Or can they just as likely be for shorter time frames? **ANSWER:** Most proposals are for three years, but you can propose a shorter-term project, if you can achieve outcomes in a shorter time frame.

QUESTION: What are some examples of how impact has been measured? **ANSWER:** See the information under "Impact Reporting" on the BFRDP "more information" page (<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html>). Many projects use before-and-after questionnaires and tests, and follow-up interviews. We highly recommend involving a professional evaluator on your team to lead the design and conduct of impact assessment and reporting.

QUESTION: What would be a good way to review what others have done? **ANSWER:** See "Abstracts of Funded Projects" at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmersandranchers.cfm>. They include project reports, not just abstracts.

QUESTION: I have found samples of past abstracts, but not full proposals. Are there full proposals available? **ANSWER:** No, but the "abstracts" of funded projects are quite detailed.

QUESTION: Would a project that offers several different tracks for different audiences be competitive? For example, one general track and several specialized tracks that not everyone would do? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: We run a conference each year that educates young farmers, the number one challenge to recruiting attendees is cost. Is expanding this and reducing the cost an acceptable use of funds?

ANSWER: Projects may include conferences, but a proposal for a conference alone would likely not be enough to show the outcomes that are expected of a strong BFRDP project.

QUESTION: What valuable suggestions could you offer to a project that is fairly new at beginning farmer training that would help to create a strong proposal? **ANSWER:** Look at prior projects, get to know your audience, and find partners with expertise and experience that you lack.

QUESTION: Can proposals address more than one priority topic? **ANSWER:** Yes, and most do. But be careful about having too many objectives, if it means that your proposal is not cohesive or achievable.

QUESTION: Have any projects been funded in [my state]? **ANSWER:** We have funded at least one project in every state except West Virginia, and not yet in most of the insular areas (e.g., American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, N. Marianas, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands).

Questions Related to Audience or Definition of Beginning Farmer

QUESTION: What if a son wants to participate as new farmer but parents have been farming for over 20 years? **ANSWER:** The son would be considered a beginning farmer.

QUESTION: What if refugees may have done farming in their home country but want to learn to farm in the US? Would they qualify as new farmer? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: Does a proposal qualify if it involves a mentorship component where the mentors have 10+ years' experience but mentors and mentees fall into one of the groups (i.e., socially disadvantaged/limited-resource or military veterans)? **ANSWER:** The mentees would have to be beginning farmers or ranchers; that is, in their first ten years of operating, or interested in entering farming/ranching.

QUESTION: Are farmers necessarily "farm-owners" or can the program train people into multiple farm roles - farm manager, propagation manager, etc? **ANSWER:** Yes, but the main target of the program is farm operators, not allied or supporting careers, unless those are on a path to becoming a farm operator.

QUESTION: If a cattle farmer gets out of cattle and starts produce farming will he be able to qualify as a beginning farmer? **ANSWER:** Not for the purposes of this program, if s/he has more than ten years as a cattle farmer.

QUESTION: Would training individuals in market gardening for supplemental income count as farmer training? **ANSWER:** Yes, if they are on a path to commercial farming (which may be part-time) but no, if they are gardening primarily for their own consumption and the "supplemental income" is minor.

Questions Related to Projects Serving Military Veterans:

QUESTION: What is the military definition, post 9/11 or broader? **ANSWER:** Broader; anyone with military experience who is a beginning farmer or rancher.

QUESTION: Will we be responsible to verifying the Veteran's status or show a DD214 for each veteran served? **ANSWER:** No; we evaluate your proposal's plans for outreach, education, etc. and ask you to report participation but that can be based on participants' responses to your evaluations.

QUESTION: Does the definition of military veteran include those in reserve? **ANSWER:** Yes, if the reserve has been called into active duty.

QUESTION: If our project plans to target populations within both the subsets of the "Limited-Resource/Socially Disadvantaged" and "Military Veterans", then should we apply for one subset in particular, or both, or neither? **ANSWER:** Both, if your project aims to serve both subsets.

Questions Related to AgrAbility

QUESTION: How is 'disability' defined for eligibility for AgrAbility? **ANSWER:** It is defined by the program. It may include, for example, arthritis, diabetes, back injury, visual impairment, hearing limitations, brain injury, or amputation – any condition that impedes a farmer's physical ability to work in a regular way on a farm or ranch.

QUESTION: Do we apply separately for AgrAbility? **ANSWER:** You apply separately if you want to start an AgrAbility program. But if you want to cooperate with an AgrAbility program in your BFRDP work, you can contact an AgrAbility team in your state or the National AgrAbility Project at Purdue University (<http://www.agrability.org/>) and see what part of the work they can do, and then describe that as part of your BFRDP proposal.

QUESTION: If a state AgrAbility project is a partner doing specific activities with us, is there a problem with paying them with BFRD funds? **ANSWER:** You would need to keep the activities separate, so that there is no duplication of funding.

QUESTION: Is lack of English considered a "disability?" **ANSWER:** No. AgrAbility has translated some of its materials translated into Spanish, however. Please contact the National AgrAbility Project (<http://www.agrability.org/>) for more information.

QUESTION: If AgrAbility (SRAP & national) is a separate proposal, what is the link to apply? **ANSWER:** FY 2015 Request for Proposals for SRAPs is expected to be released in early 2015. National AgrAbility Project is not being competed in FY 2015. To view FY 2014 RFP for SRAPs, go to <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/agrabilitynationalagrabilityprojectnap.cfm>

Questions Related to Projects Serving Socially Disadvantaged, Limited-Resource, or Farmworker Audiences

QUESTION: Where can I find the definition of socially disadvantaged? **ANSWER:** See the "Definitions" section of the RFA.

QUESTION: Are all women considered socially disadvantaged, or only women within other socially disadvantaged groups? **ANSWER:** For BFRDP, a focus on women would count as a project serving a socially disadvantaged audience. For other USDA programs, that may not be the case.

QUESTION: Do we verify income according to the definition for limited resource? **ANSWER:** No. Your project should identify and aim to serve an audience, and document who you reach, but not require participants to provide personal information to document exact status.

QUESTION: If individual is a farmworker, they need to begin as a farm owner/operator to qualify?

ANSWER: They should be interested in transitioning from being a farmworker to becoming an owner or operator.

QUESTION: One of the biggest challenges to socially disadvantaged farmers is access to capital. Can

you discuss how this might be addressed in this grant opportunity? **ANSWER:** Access to land and capital are big challenges. Your project should find local sources and solutions and help people connect with them.

QUESTION: Do we utilize the standard application or a separate one for socially disadvantaged?

ANSWER: There is only one application, the same for all proposals.

QUESTION: Does serving military veterans and/or socially-disadvantaged audiences preclude applicants from being in the general pool? **ANSWER:** No, there is not a separate pool or process for proposals

serving the audiences for which there are funding set-asides. Reviewers evaluate all proposals by the evaluation criteria published in the RFA. Then, if funding the highest-ranked proposals would not achieve the funding targets for military veterans or socially-disadvantaged audiences (at least 5% of program funds should be spent on each), we might choose a somewhat lower-ranked (but still highly rated) proposal to achieve the program goal.

Questions Related to Eligibility and Partnering:

QUESTION: Is a CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution) eligible to apply? **ANSWER:** Yes, if leading a collaboration or network.

QUESTION: Is a project led by a non-profit organization, with subcontractors, considered a collaboration? **ANSWER:** Yes, depending on the roles of the subcontractors; reviewers will evaluate the qualifications of the partnership or collaboration.

QUESTION: Can a faith-based organization apply if the purpose is not primarily religious but educational? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: Can a single organization participate on competing grants? **ANSWER:** Yes, to do different work, but you cannot propose to do the same work on two proposals to NIFA programs at the same time.

QUESTION: Am I understanding that one organization can apply, but will need to show collaboration with other organizations? Or do multiple organizations have to apply for the grant together? **ANSWER:** The proposal should come from the collaborative group together. There will be one lead applicant, and other organizations would be subcontractors.

QUESTION: If we are a sub-grantee in a similar federal grant, are we eligible to apply for this grant if it will expand our capacity to provide services? **ANSWER:** Yes, for an expansion that does not overlap with what is already funded. You may not apply for funds to do the same work you are doing under the other award, but you can apply to do additional/different work.

QUESTION: If there are several non-governmental partners, would it still be ok if, say the State Dept. of Labor wanted to sign on as a partner, or would that hinder the chances of the grant? **ANSWER:** Yes, any

partner that brings something relevant to the project can be added. A project with too many partners may present a management challenge, however.

QUESTION: Can you expand on what is meant by "with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach will be given priority in funding." We are a new program, so I am wondering how we can best show collective expertise among the collaborators. **ANSWER:** Reviewers will evaluate your credentials and your track record, so those with little experience should find collaborators so that the whole team has all of the expertise needed to carry out the project.

QUESTION: Will unfunded partners carry as much weight as funded partners? **ANSWER:** Yes, if they have a role in the project and are willing to provide it without funding. But sharing the budget with partners is often a good idea unless it is clear that the partner can play the desired role without funding.

QUESTION: Who counts as Senior/Key persons: do we have to submit all information on every single person involved (i.e. potential guest speakers for one class), or only if the grant will fund them?

ANSWER: Key persons are those who contribute in a substantial way to the project, such as those who are responsible for the success of the project or a key component of the project, whether or not they are receiving funding from the grant. A guest speaker for one class would not normally be a key person.

Questions Related to Renewal Applications:

QUESTION: Should renewal applications have the same title as the original grant? **ANSWER:** No, the title can be different.

QUESTION: We had a BFRDP grant in 2010 which we just completed. Our new application will be somewhat different from that application. Are we obligated to submit a renewal? **ANSWER:** Yes. A renewal application is the same as a new application (same amount, term, etc.) but it also includes your prior accomplishments and what you learned and intend to improve, which we want reviewers to evaluate.

QUESTION: If we were previously funded for a one-year grant and this grant was completed, will our application this year be considered a new app or renewal app? **ANSWER:** Renewal. That gives you the opportunity to describe what you have learned, and the reviewers also consider the progress report on your prior grant.

QUESTION: We were funded for a one year program and it is completed. We envision this new application will "look" different based upon what we learned from our first grant and we plan to work with different collaborative partners. Would this be a new grant and not a renewal? **ANSWER:** It should be submitted as a renewal, so that reviewers will evaluate your prior accomplishments and your lessons learned and plans for improvement.

QUESTION: If we are applying for a renewal grant and we already completed a one-year project (that is, a one-year developmental award), does that mean we are applying for two years or three years?

ANSWER: A renewal application can propose a new workplan up to the limit in the RFA (that is, 3 years for a standard grant).

QUESTION: If our current grant does not end until two years from the application deadline, can we still apply for a renewal? **ANSWER:** We would not fund the same organization to do the same objectives in

overlapping projects, so it is best to wait. If the new project has different objectives, budget, etc. (i.e., is not overlapping) you could apply, but reviewers and NIFA would scrutinize whether you have the capacity to carry out both projects at the same time.

Questions Related to Development Awards:

QUESTION: What are the caps in dollars and time on the developmental grant? **ANSWER:** The amount will be determined by NIFA, but is typically \$100,000 or less for a term of 12 months.

QUESTION: Will Standard proposals automatically be considered for a development grant, or must an applicant specify they want to be considered if full funding is not granted? **ANSWER:** You should specify that you want to be considered, and supply a letter stating that you have never received a grant from NIFA or its predecessor CSREES (if you have previously received a NIFA award you are not eligible for a development award).

QUESTION: If we do not show expertise effectively, would that make us likely to be considered for a development grant award? **ANSWER:** Perhaps, if your organization appears to have promise in other ways, but then part of the development process should be to develop relationships with partners who have the needed expertise.

Questions Related to the Review and Award Process:

QUESTION: If we applied previously but were not funded, how do we get reviewer notes? **ANSWER:** Project Directors of unsuccessful proposals are emailed the reviewers' comments. If you were the PD and cannot locate that email, and it is not in your spam/junk email box, contact BFRDP program staff to re-send.

QUESTION: Can multiple proposals come from one institution? **ANSWER:** Yes, we do not prohibit multiple applications, but we caution that you need to consider your capacity to submit more than one good application (versus concentrating on your best idea). And we rarely if ever fund the same organization to do more than one project at a time, unless the reviewers and NIFA are convinced that the organization has the capacity to carry out both projects well at the same time, and that the audiences for the projects are not overlapping, which is rarely the case except for a large organization with multiple locations.

QUESTION: You ask questions about program sustainability beyond the term of the grant. How have prior awardees successfully sustained their programs? **ANSWER:** It varies. Some find funding from donors, members or partners; some rely on program income once their programs are established; some build endowments or other kinds of capacity among organizations or partners.

Questions Related to the Use of Funds/Allowable Costs:

QUESTION: Can funds be used to enhance accessibility for individuals who will be educated as a part of the program. Enhancements would also be used to educate individuals on modifications that could be made to their own farm operation. **ANSWER:** Only if justified as an educational demonstration/expense, not a building/facilities modification.

QUESTION: Is there a cost limit for what is considered 'major equipment'? **ANSWER:** **Major equipment is considered any piece of equipment costing \$5,000 or more. There is not** a specific limit on the dollar amount permitted to be spent on major equipment, but the project budget should be primarily for education and training, and you should consider whether renting equipment would be more cost-effective.

QUESTION: Are coldframe purchases okay if they are used for demonstrations? **ANSWER:** Yes, if justified as necessary for education/training.

QUESTION: Can NIFA funds be used for AI (artificial insemination) training certification for selected people from group to keep the beef producers sustainable? **ANSWER:** Yes, if they are beginning farmers/ranchers, and if the expense can be justified as part of an educational program.

QUESTION: Is food and lodging for farm apprentices a valid grant expense? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: Is travel and lodging an allowable expense if used to help program participants attend agricultural training programs? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: Would the expense of field representatives for on-farm training and assessment be allowable? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: Can funds be used to purchase text books, training materials? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: Can funds be used to purchase animals? **ANSWER:** Not for farming operations, but yes if a modest expense for education/training/demonstration purposes.

QUESTION: Can funds be used to purchase a building to host research? **ANSWER:** No, BFRDP funds cannot be used to purchase a building, and they also cannot be used for research.

QUESTION: Can funds be used for staff salary to implement the program, rental of office space to hold class room trainings, or pay for training classes held at a local college? **ANSWER:** Yes to all, including space to hold classroom trainings, but not office space if it is included in your negotiated indirect cost rate.

QUESTION: Does the "no equipment, etc." part also apply if setting up a training farm? **ANSWER:** Expensive equipment would be difficult to justify in a 3-year project if it could be leased more cost-effectively. If equipment can be justified as necessary to the training/education project, it would be allowed. BFRDP would rarely fund the "set-up of a training farm" since most of the budget should go to education and training, not setting up a farm.

QUESTION: Does the grant allow for spending any money on tangible farm equipment, amendments, etc. if it is used for training purposes? **ANSWER:** Yes, but amendments, equipment costs, and other expenses need to be appropriate to the education/training purpose of the project.

QUESTION: Can costs for interpretation and translation be covered as part of this grant as instrumental to the educational/training process? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: Would it be possible to use grant funds for new farmer apprenticeships/internships? **ANSWER:** Yes.

Questions Related to Matching Funds

QUESTION: Must the 25% match for the entire three years be secured before submitting application?

ANSWER: Yes, or at least be in place and documented by the time the award is made.

QUESTION: Can match be in-kind? **ANSWER:** Yes.

QUESTION: Is there a requirement that any part of the match be in cash or can it be in-kind, only.

ANSWER: It can be either cash or in-kind alone, or a combination of both.

QUESTION: On match, what are some examples of eligible in-kind? **ANSWER:** Personnel, supplies, some or all of allowable indirect costs, or anything else that would be allowable as a requested amount. You cannot use as match anything that would not be allowable as a direct cost (for example, you cannot use unrecovered indirect costs above the allowable amount.)

QUESTION: Is there a percentage cap on in-kind contributions as part of the 25% match? **ANSWER:** No.

QUESTION: Does the match need to be committed at the time of application? Or can it just be applied for as long as it is committed before the project start date? **ANSWER:** It must be committed and documented by the time we begin making the award (that is, when you are notified that the award is recommended), but reviewers may consider your proposal to be stronger if you have the match committed at the time of application.

QUESTION: If match must be secured by time of award, does that mean match can be pending between submission and notice of award, thereby giving applicants more time to secure match? **ANSWER:** Yes, but matching commitments from partners may make your proposal appear stronger to reviewers.

QUESTION: Can the match be from a non-federal agency who fund projects with federal funds?

ANSWER: No. The match cannot be from federal funds, and funds that come from the federal government are considered federal funds no matter who they pass through on their way to you.

QUESTION: For matching, how does NIFA account for a match that is a no-cost lease of land and buildings? Fair market value? **ANSWER:** You must have some way to substantiate the estimate of fair market value of the lease. It should be based on the rental rate of similar property located in the area and substantiated through real estate records. It would not be based on the sale value or assessed value since the land is not being purchased.

QUESTION: How do we know which Team Leader or Branch Chief is the best contact for a particular question? **ANSWER:** You may contact any of them with any question.

QUESTION: If you get a 3-year BFRDP award, can the match be paid over the 3 years as long as you have a letter of commitment for the full matching amount up front? **ANSWER:** The match must be secured in full at the beginning of the project, so the source would have to have the funds identified at the beginning of the project, even if paid into the project later. As long as the matching commitment is secured, it may be paid out over the three year project period.

QUESTION: If you have a lease fee on equipment - would that be in-kind matching? **ANSWER:** Yes, to the extent that the equipment is being used for the project.

QUESTION: Do you have a deadline as to when award recipients would be notified, e.g. 90 days after the Application Deadline? The question goes directly to the earlier issue of "securing" the matching.

ANSWER: Applicants are generally notified in about 3-4 months, by which time the match must be secured. It will then take additional time to complete the paperwork to make the award (and for the funds to be available to start the project).

QUESTION: Your power point said that funds from an organization doing a similar project cannot be used as matching funds. But what if that organization is a partner or collaborator and their program is part of your project and counted as an in-kind contribution. **ANSWER:** That would be acceptable as long as the work is not being counted twice.

QUESTION: Re: training farm equipment - it sounded like we couldn't even use that as match, correct?

ANSWER: You could use the rental value of farm equipment, if you normally charge for it, to the extent that it is used for education and training.

QUESTION: Can in kind donations of time and consulting from Extension services be counted as match?

ANSWER: Yes. You would need to provide a letter of commitment signed by the Authorized Representative of the Extension Service to include this time as matching.

QUESTION: Subawardee matching funds documentation: is that document yearly, or cumulative?

ANSWER: One letter can document all of that organization's match, but should be clear about the timing as well as amount of the commitment.

QUESTION: Do we have to pay for an appraisal to document the value of land as an in-kind contribution? If the land is currently being leased could the existing lease be used to document the value of the in-kind contribution? **ANSWER:** You do not need an appraisal. You can use the lease, but be able to document that the lease rate is reasonable, not just set up for the project.

QUESTION: Could the County tax assessment of the value of the land be sufficient? **ANSWER:** No, it is not the assessed or purchase value of the land that needs to be established, it is the use value (e.g., rental value). Best to discuss your specific situation with one of the contacts for Administrative Questions in the Request for Applications.

Questions Related to the Application Format and Process

QUESTION: Page limit for narrative -- RFP indicates either single or double spaced. Therefore either is acceptable? **ANSWER:** Yes, but most proposals are single-spaced, to maximize the amount of information in the proposal within the page limit.

QUESTION: Regarding subcontractors' budgets: do their budget justifications need to be broken out with yearly information or is cumulative acceptable. **ANSWER:** Those should be annual as well as cumulative.

QUESTION: If we applied in 2011 and were not funded, is that considered a new application or resubmitted application? **ANSWER:** Resubmitted, if you are proposing substantially similar work and addressing the prior reviewers' comments.

QUESTION: When requesting not to send in "form letters," is that for letters of commitment from collaborating organizations? **ANSWER:** Yes, each letter should be specific to the role that each collaborator is committing to.

QUESTION: Can we submit for a project starting two years or more after the application due date?

ANSWER: No, you should wait until the next year.

QUESTION: On the page limitation, are the attachments allowed as additional pages beyond the narrative page limit? **ANSWER:** Yes, if it is specified in the RFA as a separate attachment.

QUESTION: Can you give a recap on the funding cycle timeline? **ANSWER:** It typically takes 3-4 months from the application deadline until we notify applicants of the results, and then another 2-3 months to finalize the awards for those that are recommended for funding.

QUESTION: Can we seek your technical assistance on the application? **ANSWER:** No, NIFA staff can respond to questions but we cannot help prepare your application.

QUESTION: What are the annual and total limits, in terms of maximum budgets? **ANSWER:** Standard grants can request up to \$250,000 per year for up to three years and in addition to that request provide the 25% match. Educational Enhancement proposals in 2015 can request up to \$200,000 per year for up to four years.

QUESTION: What is the average grant amount and term? **ANSWER:** The average (non-development) standard award in 2014 was approximately \$600,000 and the median was about \$680,000, not counting grantee matching funds. Most standard grant proposals are for the full three years, since it is difficult to demonstrate solid outcomes in a shorter period of time.

QUESTION: Will all three years of selected projects be funded out of the funding offered in a given year, or just the first year? Put another way, if a typical project ask is \$600,000 do you expect to make around 30 grants or 90 grants? **ANSWER:** We generally fund all years up front, so typically 30-35 projects per year.